

- Tobe made "Face of the Dead" at 12, a full-length horror movie ("Face of A Dead Man")
- Wayne Thomas' parents owned Braxton's Toy Town
- Grand Prairie High School Students:
 - Angella Sutton
 - Barbara Smith
 - Sunny Smith
 - Wayne Thomas
 - Janice Hozea
 - Jimmy Johnson
- Tobe writes scripts, Sunny edits
- KFJZ-TV: Slam Bang Theatre
- Play: "A Sense of Justice"
- film: "Blue Nights." (90 min, 8mm)
- "The Abyss" AKA "Skull of the Abyss"

Palestine, Texas - Age 12

- "Face of A Dead Man" or "Face of the Dead"
- 8mm Frankenstein-inspired 7th grade science project
- 1st sound film

918 511 9287

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 1959
"The Heir of Frankenstein" 16mm

- Spent 2 years filming
- 1/3 of the way through filming, they ran out of money
- Name of W. R. Hooper's Hotel? (171-unit motor hotel)
- Dad sick w/ Cancer

Grand Prairie, Texas 1959, Lennox Hotel

- The Corrigan interests of Dallas granted W. R. Hooper a 5-year operational lease on the Lennox Hotel, taking over April 1, 1959
- Hooper in Hotel business for 30 years by then
- Married & has 4 children (age 10-16) - ???
Grand Prairie Daily News, Sun, Mar. 29, 1959
- Lennox: 116-room building
- Fire proof structure, carpeted throughout, with 3 banquet rooms & a restaurant
- Year-round A/C, used as a meeting place for Grand Prairie civic & social clubs

Falcon Productions, Incorporated

"The largest motion-picture studio between Fort Worth & Dallas"

- First film: "Blue Nights"
- Stage play "A Sense of Justice", to be produced concurrently
- Tobe Hooper (16) & Wayne Thomas (14) had made several short films beforehand
- Tobe & Wayne handled all duties themselves to that point but now needed help (to work for nothing) such as camera persons, prop-makers, & actors
- Casting call at the Lennox (Falcon Productions HQ)
- Tobe writes script, Sunny Smith edits
- Tobe also makes his own props & does makeup himself, in addition to acting/directing
- Film crew meets one weekend night a week, at least for rehearsals w/ actors

"Blue Nights"

- Tobe hoped to sell the film to a television or motion-picture studio after filming
- 6-Person crew from Grand Prairie High School:
1) Angela Sutton 2) Barbara Smith 3) Sunny Smith
4) Wayne Thomas 5) Janice Hozea 6) Jimmy Johnson
- "On more than one occasion the company that develops Tobe's color film has censored some particularly gruesome footage"
- "The latest incident showed a scene where Tobe was supposed to be shot, he had his mouth full of blood, but where it started gushing out, that's where the censor cut the film"
- Wayne & Tobe experiments with a new formula for blood:
mixture of water, red cake coloring, & Hershey's chocolate syrup ("it even coagulates")
- used the vacant rooms in the Lennox Hotel with props & merchandise from Braxton's Toy Town, which Wayne's Parents owned
- The film's plot:
"... a young man's climb to success & how he acts when he reaches the top"
"It's built around the power of suggestion, & we plan to display every type of emotion!"

"Blue Nights" (Continued)

- Tobe is starring, Producing, & directing
- Tobe's also President of Falcon Productions, which had \$1,000 invested
- Directing since he was 10
- Female lead: Janette Hosea (14) in her 1st starring role
- Film's story: Janette plays the girl who forms the point of the triangle involving young Hooper & 14-year-old Wayne Thomas
- Tobe's role: the poor boy who works & fights his way to success & fame as a screen star. Janette provided that something for him to fight for
- Wayne co-stars as the "playboy rolling in the dough"
- Runtime 90 min, 8mm

Play: "A Sense of Justice"

"The Abyss"

or

"The Skull of the Abyss"

(1960)

1st 16mm film

&

1st completed production

- The story of a prisoner awaiting execution who escapes, gets killed, & goes to hell, before realizing that he never really escaped at all but had been dead the whole time
- \$700 donated to the film's budget by Tobe's dad
- Tobe: "Maybe 20 people saw it... but when it was finished, I felt like wow! Breakthrough! Because it had sound, it had music, it was 30 minutes long. I knew I was going to be a director

W. R. Hooper dies April 21, 1961

Tobe is back in Austin by May

Muir Book

- Both of Hooper's parents were movie fans & worked in hotel biz
- Hooper recalls starting to watch films at 3